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RUSSIANS MAKE DIPLOMATIC GAINS BUT REITERATE PREVIOUS OFFERS IN CURRENT NOTE

1. While the Soviet note of 23 August reveals no basic change in the Kremlin's policy towards the German question, it may give the Soviet Union a significant propaganda advantage. The Allies must now bear the onus for refusing to fulfill the Soviet invitation to a 4-Power meeting, which Moscow asked to be held before October. Although the Soviet Union did not accept the Allies' conditions for such talks, namely that the agenda would be focused on the selection and authority of an election investigating commission, it is problematical that the people of Europe will grasp this fact.

2. The very timing of this fourth Soviet note in the current exchange suggests that it was aimed directly at hindering West German ratification of the Bonn-Paris treaties. The time span between the previous Allied notes and their Soviet counter-replies has amounted to only two weeks whereas on this occasion, the Soviets waited six and half weeks to reply. Moscow obviously did not desire to send the note in the middle of the West German Parliamentary recess, causing the note to lose impact, but rather preferred to send it just prior to Parliament's reconvening next week when it will consider ratifying the treaties.

3. The note itself reiterates Moscow's theme that the basis of a German settlement is the Potsdam agreement. It proposes that an October meeting of the Big Four discuss the drafting of a German Peace Treaty, the formation of an all-German government, the creation of an elections commission, and the withdrawal of occupation troops. The Kremlin also proposes for the first time in the current exchange that the formation of an all-German government be left for the East and West German Governments to decide. However, this particular theme has frequently been espoused on other occasions by both the East German Government and the Soviet Union. It is patent that Moscow is unable to ameliorate its previous terms without jeopardizing its position in East Germany.

4. Initially, the West Germans will react apathetically, ^{to} this latest Soviet move since it represents no advance over previous offers, and because the populace is suspicious of Moscow's intentions. However, if previous reactions to Soviet notes are a guide, the lure of unity will cause some West Germans to press for talks now. Chancellor Adenauer will remain firmly opposed to any Allied-Russian talks prior to ratification, his coalition partners may waver somewhat, and the Social Democratic opposition will call for immediate meetings. Probably, Adenauer will be able to restrain any sentiment for meetings, but the possibility remains that the present offer combined with possible unfavorable developments in the current Saar negotiations might cause some delay in the ratification procedure. Moreover, several other factors may give impetus to any delaying tendencies: apparently little progress was made on the ratification instruments by Parliamentary committees during the Parliamentary recess, and ratification under even optimum

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circumstance may be extended well into October and possibly November; the Social Democrats have a new delaying weapon in a Parliamentary resolution, passed early in July which requested the government to press for Four Power meetings; and lastly, Stalin can be counted upon in the 19th Congress meeting in October to back up the latest note by a major diplomatic thrust designed to throw the West off balance. If ratification is delayed in West Germany until November or December as the result of these factors, final ratification of the treaties by their last signatory members will not occur until late spring of 1953. It is clear that the note, or even 4-Power talks if they should occur, cannot upset German ratification, but only delay it.

5. Whether or not pressure develops in France for a Big Four meeting is another major factor. Generally the French populace is anxious to avoid proceeding with West German rearmament, and consequently clutches at straws which might forestall it. Moreover, Foreign Minister Schuman faces a personal political crisis at home, and may desire to push for talks so as to strengthen his personal position. It was on his insistence that the Allies proceeded to make the invitation for Four-Power talks in the last July note.

6. Although the Allies will probably refuse the present Russian counter-invitation, they will be coerced once again to formulate another reply. In any case the Russians seem to have improved their position over what it was following their previous note of 24 May.

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